UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

"A Celebration of Black History through Music" featuring University of Toronto Faculty of Music Gospel Choir

Dr. Darren Hamilton, *conductor and event curator/coordinator*

Saturday, February 7, 2026 at 7:30pm | Lyric Theatre – Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge St

PROGRAM

Set 1

Expect The Great

Composed by Darien Dennis, Kenneth Shelton and Jonathan Nelson
Recorded by Jonathan Nelson & Purpose

Wade in The Water

African American Spiritual
Recorded by The Fisk Jubilee Singers
Jessica Dawdy, Megan O'Donnell, Marina Tanaka, *soloists*

Lord, Help Me To Hold Out

Composed by Harrison Johnson
Arrangement by Rev. James Cleveland
Recorded by Harrison Johnson and the Los Angeles Community Choir (1969)
Rev. James Cleveland (1973)
Jake Manucdoc, Anna Smith, *soloists*

God Is Standing By

Composed by Johnnie Taylor
Recorded by Sam Cooke and The Soul Stirrers
Noah Amodeo *(soloist),* Jake Manucdoc, Rocco Marciano, Max Yeung, *quartet*

God Is Standing By

Composed by Johnnie Taylor
Recorded by George Nooks
Kendra Spencer-Cole*,* Fatima Qaraan, *soloists*

I Love The Lord

Composed by Richard Smallwood
Recorded by The Richard Smallwood Singers (1982),
Whitney Houston and the Georgia Mass Choir (1996)
Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin, *guest soloist*; Tanya Charles, *guest violinist*

Do Not Pass Me By (Pass Me Not)

Composed by Fanny Crosby
Arranged by Douglas Miller, MC Hammer (rap verses), N.I.F.T.Y (original rap verse)
Recorded by Douglas Miller and the True Way Choir C.O.G.I.C. (1982) | MC Hammer (1991)
N.I.F.T.Y., *guest rapper* | Megan O'Donnell, *soloist*

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures.
Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin
Visiting Guest Artist, Berklee College of Music (Boston, MA, USA)
Courtenay Frazer, *keyboard accompanist*

Come Sunday
Composed by Duke Ellington

I Want Jesus To Walk With Me
African American Spiritual

Alabaster Box
Composed by Janice Sjostrand

If I Can Help Somebody
Composed by Alma Androzzo

Intermission (20 minutes)

Set 2

Standing In The Need Of Prayer
African American Spiritual
Recorded by The Gaither Vocal Band
Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin, *guest soloist*
The Bishop Strachan School x
Father John Redmond Catholic Secondary School Gospel Choir

He's Able
Composed by Kirk Franklin
Recorded by Kirk Franklin and the Family
Noah Amodeo, Laura Storey, Isabella Man, *soloists*
The Bishop Strachan School x
Father John Redmond Catholic Secondary School Gospel Choir x
University of Toronto Faculty of Music Gospel Choir

Do You See Them?
Composed by Aaron Manswell and Darren Hamilton
Recorded by University of Toronto Faculty of Music Gospel Choir
Tanya Charles, *guest violinist*

The Lord Will Make A Way Somehow
Composed by Thomas A. Dorsey
Recorded by Thomas A. Dorsey and Marion Williams
Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin, *guest soloist*

The Lord Will Make A Way Somehow
Composed by Thomas A. Dorsey
Arranged by Hezekiah Walker and B. Jeffrey Grant-Clark
Recorded by New Jerusalem Baptist Church Choir (1987)
Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Crusade Choir (1987)
Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin, *guest soloist*

The Best Is Yet To Come
Composed by Donald Lawrence
Recorded by Donald Lawrence and the Tri-City Singers
N.I.F.T.Y, *guest rapper,* Tanya Charles*, guest violinist*

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MUSIC GOSPEL CHOIR

Dr. Darren Hamilton, *conductor*
Desaraé Dee, *professional gospel accompanist*
Natalie Stewart, *teaching assistant*

Sopranos	**Altos**	**Tenors**	**Baritone/Basses**
Diane Baek	Justine Coroza	Mya Davidson	Noah Amodeo
Giuliana Barrow Lattanzio	Julia Hincapie	David Harrison	Adam Babadi
Emily Bilbao Sanchez	Heather Hurst	Judy Jin	Andrew Cruikshank
Karen Chandler	Korin Inoue	Laila McFarlane	Jake Manucdoc
Jessica Dawdy	Ai Ishida	Julian Munro	Rocco Marciano
Alex Forsyth	Ariana Kantouri	Asal Naimi	Scott Reed
Marina Kelbas	Eunchae Lee	Esther Neethirajah	Max Yeung
Emma Li	Isabella Man	Fatima Qaraan	
Irene Li	Zimra Obimdike	Johnny Rabbito	
Megan O'Donnell	Deandra Osayande	Alex Siddhantakar	
Joyce Okojie	Lisa Ryder	JJ Viviers	
Laura Storey	Anna Smith	Natalie Yu	
Marina Tanaka	Kendra Spencer-Cole	Simon Yu	
Christine Zhang	Matilda Wilson		
	Yao Xiong		

CONCERT RHYTHM SECTION

Desaraé Dee, *musical director, lead keys*
Kimberly Brathwaite, *auxiliary keys*
Pascal Adesina, *electric guitar*
Ronjay Clarke, *electric bass guitar*
Sashane Brearcliffe-Clarke, *drums*

THE BISHOP STRACHAN SCHOOL CHOIR

Natalie DiNardo, *vocal music teacher*
Tara Burt, d*irector of arts*
Brendan Lea, *principal*

FATHER JOHN REDMOND CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL CHOIR

Dawn Pear, *vocal music teacher*
Frank Pincente, *arts department head*
John D'Onofrio, *principal*

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

The University of Toronto Faculty of Music Gospel Choir was founded in 2019 by Dr. Darren Hamilton. It is a credit course offering, currently open to students in the Faculty of Music, the Toronto School of Theology, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Toronto. The ensemble explores and performs various forms of gospel music repertoire, ranging from African American spirituals to mainstream contemporary gospel music. Since its inception, the choir has performed for many Faculty of Music and Toronto School of Theology events. In 2024, the choir hosted and headlined its inaugural "A Celebration of Black History through Music" event and was featured in a documentary by award-winning producer, Alisa Siegel, that aired on three CBC radio programs, *IDEAS, The Current with Matt Galloway,* and *Storylines*. The choir also performed at the 2024 Toronto Jazz Festival's "Gospel in the Grove" event. The choir has shared the stage with JUNO-nominated gospel recording artist, Patricia Shirley, JUNO Award-winning gospel recording artist, Sharon Riley, and has worked with award-winning Canadian instrumental fusion artist, composer and producer, Desarae Dee. In November 2025, the choir released its debut original recording, "Do You See Them?", co-composed by Aaron Manswell (DMA, composition, 2026) and Dr. Darren Hamilton.

Dr. Darren Hamilton is an assistant professor of music education and the founding director of the University of Toronto Faculty of Music Gospel Choir. His research interests lie in formal gospel music, popular music and hip-hop music education, in addition to anti-Black racism, equity, diversity and social justice in music education. He has served as a member of the JUNO-nominated Youth Outreach Mass Choir and the JUNO Award-winning Toronto Mass Choir (TMC), where he now serves as an assistant director. He has also guest conducted performances for the Oakville Choral Society, the Tyndale Community Choir, the University of Toronto Chamber Choir and the University of Toronto Tenor-Bass Choir. Dr. Darren Hamilton was the recipient of the 2022 JUNO Award for MusiCounts Teacher of the Year, recognising his commitment to equity and diversity, as well as his professional contributions to the field of music education.

Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin is a vocalist, composer, scholar, and educator with over 20 years of experience in performance, pedagogy, and cultural advocacy. She is Chair of the Ensemble Department at Berklee College of Music, creator of the Soul Ingredients® Methodology, and founder of the Soul Ingredients® Voice Studio. Her work centers on preserving and promoting African American music traditions through performance, scholarship, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Dr. Robinson-Martin developed Soul Ingredients®, a voice methodology that teaches singers to develop authentic musical expression in genres such as jazz, gospel, R&B, and blues. She is the author of *So You Want to Sing Gospel,* and a contributor to several academic texts on Black music and voice. As a performer, she blends soul, jazz, and gospel, earning praise for her emotionally resonant artistry. Her debut album *All or Nothing*, featuring Cyrus Chestnut and Don Braden, reflects her deep musical roots and interpretive range. We are pleased to have Dr. Robinson-Martin as visiting guest scholar, clinician, and performer for our February 2026 Black History Month activities.

Courtenay Frazer is an accomplished Canadian musician, arranger, and music director whose career spans over two decades of live performance, studio recording, and musical direction. Known for his soulful sound and versatility across genres, Courtenay has established himself as a dynamic force in live music, and as a professor teaching a range of students from music to creative arts, performance, and personal development. Courtenay has performed at many concert halls such as Massy Hall, Koerner Hall, and the Scotia Bank Arena, and at major events hosted by various TD Jazz Festivals, TD Blues Festivals, Centennial College, Mic Check Magazine, and Sickle Cell Campaigns, to name a few. In addition to his stage presence, Courtenay has worked extensively as a music director and arranger, notably with

The Honourable Julius Alexander Isaac, the Vibe Awards, and leading high-profile house bands for Maestro Fresh Wes, and Jully Black. As a frequent contributor to workshops and educational initiatives, Courtenay serves as guest accompanist for Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin at “A Celebration of Black History through Music’.

Ches Christian, also known by the stage name, **N.I.F.T.Y.**, is a dynamic faith-based hip-hop artist and storyteller whose music blends soulful R&B melodies with powerful messages of hope, healing, and purpose. He is a passionate educator, recording artist, and community leader who brings over two decades of experience to the classroom—and beyond. As Canada’s first-ever Rap Performance Professor at Centennial College, Ches has paved the way for hip-hop to be recognized and respected in academic spaces. His teaching isn’t just about beats and bars—it’s about helping students find their voice, build confidence, and use music to create real change. Known for his emotionally honest lyrics and unforgettable performances, N.I.F.T.Y. uses real-life struggles and faith-based stories to inspire transformation and spark conversations that matter. N.I.F.T.Y. is more than a name — it’s an acronym for “Nothing’s Impossible For The Youth”, a statement of belief and a movement built to empower the next generation. With an energetic yet conversational performance style, N.I.F.T.Y.’s mission is simple: to inject positivity into the culture and remind people that their story isn’t over.

Tanya Charles has captivated audiences across North and South America, as well as the Caribbean, with her exceptional musical talent. Tanya is currently the concertmaster of Ensemble Obiora, a Montreal-based ensemble she has proudly led since its founding in 2021. As the soloist with this ensemble, she is proud to have performed the Canadian premiere of Florence Price’s Violin Concerto No. 1, conducted by Samy Rachid, Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, in October 2023. In addition to her role with Ensemble Obiora, Tanya is also a violinist and the Outreach Coordinator for the Toronto-based Odin Quartet. Her diverse musical background reflects a broad range of artistic collaborations and performances across various ensembles including the Canadian Opera Company, The National Ballet Orchestra of Canada, various musical theatre shows with Mirvish Productions and the Shaw Festival, as well as Toronto’s Viva Mexico Mariachi. Tanya is deeply committed to music education, serving as a dedicated educator, string adjudicator, and clinician both locally and internationally. Tanya is based in Toronto, where she shares her expertise as a faculty member at both the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Music and the Oscar Peterson Program at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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@uoftfacultyofmusicgospelchoir - Instagram Handle

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https://uoft.me/music-engagement-fund

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Assistant Stage Manager: Natalie Stewart
Front of House Coordinator, Faculty of Music: Cory Bertrand
Front of House Assistant, Faculty of Music | Stage Runner: Rasa Ghaedi

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